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LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION

City Attorney Search Committee
October 20, 2026

The City Attorney Search Committee met in the Commission Conference Room. Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley (chair) and Commissioners Chad McLeod & Mike Musick (members) were present. Commissioner Guy LaLonde, Deputy City Manager Rob Hernandez, and City Clerk Kelly Koos were also present.

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

There were 2 firms with City Attorney search experience SGR and Raftelis. We can have them do proposals or we can pick one.

The Committee discussed:

- Ramona Sirianni's willingness to stay on until a replacement is found.
- The possibility of an organizational assessment within the City Attorney's office. They will have a consultant within their own budgetary framework.
- The City Attorney's role as leader and delegator.
- The need for land use experience.
- The workload from Lakeland Electric.

The Committee should be able to get a proposal back from each firm within a week.

The Search Committee will probably work through the City Attorney's Office. The Mayor will reach out to the two search firms and request a proposal.

This is a great opportunity to look at the office and its capacity. It is a good idea to look at filling the position but also the entire department. The Committee wanted to help the office work smarter, not harder. Implementing cross training will help alleviate burnout.

The consultant will probably have good council for us in the process of searching for and selecting a new City Attorney.

The Committee anticipated (optimistically) it would take 3-4 months to hire a new attorney.

Rob Hernandez will get the contact information for the 2 firms to Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley by end of day today.

The Committee agreed to meet again on October 28, 2026 at 8:30 a.m. in the City Commission Conference Room. The City Manager's Office will send out the meeting notice.

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The Search Committee adjourned at 9:03 a.m.

Kelly S. Koos, MMC
City Clerk

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October 28, 2026

The City Attorney Search Committee met in the Commission Conference Room. Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley (chair) and Commissioners Chad McLeod & Mike Musick (members) were present. Deputy City Clerk Heather Bradman was also present.

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

The Committee reviewed proposals received from Raftelis and SGR for assistance with the City Attorney recruitment process. Copies of the proposals are on file in the agenda packet. The discussion focused on each firm's experience, proposed approach, timelines, fees, and familiarity with the City.

The Committee discussed:

- Both firms have extensive experience recruiting city attorneys and other municipal leadership positions.
- The benefits of using an outside firm to provide objectivity and assist with identifying qualified candidates.
- Differences in the firms' proposed approaches.
- The firms' respective fee structures.
- Potential recruitment strategies, including outreach through professional associations and other external channels.
- The current workload and responsibilities of the City Attorney's Office, including the extent to which City departments rely on Legal for guidance and support.

Mayor Roberts McCarley shared that she had met with the Legal Department the previous week to discuss the recruitment process and understand the current workflow and workload. A workflow assessment was identified as a component of the process to better understand existing operations and responsibilities.

The Committee discussed the qualifications and advantages of both firms. Members noted SGR's familiarity with the City through Doug Thomas, as well as its leadership development offerings and benchmarking resources.

Commissioner Musick expressed a preference for beginning with SGR because of Doug Thomas's involvement and familiarity with the City, while indicating that either firm could meet the City's needs. Commissioner McLeod similarly expressed a preference for SGR, citing the advantages of Doug Thomas's familiarity with the organization and SGR's additional resources. He also stated that he would be comfortable proceeding with Raftelis.

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Following discussion, the Committee reached a consensus to proceed with SGR for the City Attorney recruitment process, while retaining Raftelis as an alternative option.

The Committee discussed the next steps necessary to begin the recruitment process as soon as practicable. Mayor Roberts McCarley will notify both firms of the Committee's decision.[1]

The Committee's next meeting will include representatives from SGR to discuss the recruitment process and position description. Mayor Roberts McCarley will coordinate with Ashley Cheshire to schedule the meeting.

Committee members were encouraged to review the City Attorney job description independently and identify any recommended changes or areas requiring further discussion. Those observations may be addressed during the upcoming consultation with SGR.

The Committee emphasized the importance of completing the agreement and addressing preliminary matters promptly so recruitment efforts can begin without unnecessary delay.

Mayor Roberts McCarley raised the possibility of documenting the City Attorney recruitment process for future search committees, noting that the process is not currently codified.

Commissioner McLeod supported the idea, emphasizing the value of documenting the process to preserve institutional knowledge and provide guidance for future recruitment efforts.

The committee members had a discussion about safety training

The committee adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

[1] Following the meeting, Mayor Roberts McCarley spoke with City Attorney Palmer Davis regarding proceeding with the SGR task authorization, which falls under his signature authority.